

Residential Study Group (RSG)
September 18, 2018
8:30 a.m. – 10:00 a.m.
Arlington Town Hall, First Floor Conference Room
MEETING SUMMARY

Attendees: Andrew Bunnell, Mike Byrne, Mike Ciampa, Bill Copithorne, Pat Hanlon, Steve McKenna, Jonathan Nyberg, Elizabeth Pyle, Jenny Raitt, Erin Zwirko

Guests: Ted Fields, Steve Makowka, Jo Anne Preston, Don Seltzer

Jenny opened the meeting with a discussion on the proposed survey to evaluate the effectiveness of the Residential Construction Notification Agreement, also known as the Good Neighbor Agreement. She indicated that previously the Residential Study Group issued a survey in 2017 that led to the creation of the Good Neighbor Agreement. It was sent to about 700 addresses abutting where construction or demolition had recently occurred. The plan is to revise the survey to measure whether the Good Neighbor Agreement has been effective. Jo Anne indicated that she has experience in survey methods, and has some technical suggestions.

Erin explained that the survey will have a cover letter that explains what the survey is and why it is important, how to obtain a paper copy, and how the results will be reported back. Erin indicated that she would send out a copy.

Liz suggested that referring to the survey as the Residential Construction Notification Agreement is a mouthful. She suggested using just Good Neighbor Agreement instead. Liz also noted she has a number of comments, and if a Word document could be sent out, she will edit and return it. Erin agreed to send it out.

The members of the Residential Study Group continued discussing some particulars of the draft survey. It was recommended that a copy of the Good Neighbor Agreement be included with the cover letter. The questions about the town's response to any complaints were removed. Pat suggested keeping some open-ended questions where respondents can further explain anything else that might have irritated them during construction. Liz recommended that the question about tree removal needs to be revised to be clearer.

Erin indicated that she would send out the survey in Word, and members could respond to her with any edits.

The Study Group then discussed guest Ted Fields' proposed zoning amendment on the residential sky exposure plane. Ted indicated that the proposal is revised since he met with the Study Group in January. He included the R0 zoning district. The proposal limits the height of structures along the setback line. Ted indicated that the bylaw is designed to encourage the use of solar panels, increases privacy, and protects property rights, and is a better approach than simply increasing the setbacks.

The Study Group discussed the bylaw with Ted briefly before he had to depart. In general, the Study Group expressed concern with the unintended consequences of this sort of bylaw and that it was too restrictive. The Study Group had concern about the effects of dormers that might be constructed. Additionally, that height is not necessarily a stumbling block related to solar permits; rather trees are more of an issue. Not all of the members of the Study Group agreed on why they didn't support the proposal, but generally agreed that they did not want to pursue it further.

On the minutes from the August 8, 2018 meeting, Steve McKenna made a motion to accept the meeting summary. Jonathan seconded. All those in attendance voted in favor of approval.

The group discussed their upcoming meeting schedule. The tours will take place on October 5. The next regular meeting is scheduled for October 25 at 8:30 AM.

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